



Agenda Date: 10/25/01

Agenda Item: 4B

STATE OF NEW JERSEY

Board of Public Utilities

*Two Gateway Center
Newark, NJ 07102*

TELECOMMUNICATIONS

IN THE MATTER OF THE PETITION FOR AN)
ORDER AUTHORIZING CONSOLIDATED)
EDISON COMMUNICATIONS, INC.)
TO PROVIDE LOCAL EXCHANGE AND)
INTEREXCHANGE TELECOMMUNICATIONS)
SERVICES THROUGHOUT NEW JERSEY)

ORDER OF APPROVAL

DOCKET NO. TE00100802

(SERVICE LIST ATTACHED)

BY THE BOARD:

By letter dated October 20, 2000, Consolidated Edison Communications, Inc. (Petitioner or CECI) filed a petition with the Board of Public Utilities (Board) requesting authority to provide facilities-based dedicated and private line communications throughout the State of New Jersey. By letter dated September 6, 2001, CECI clarified its petition to indicate that CECI sought authorization to provide facilities-based and resale local exchange and interexchange services throughout New Jersey. CECI responded to a Staff questionnaire by letter dated August 18, 2001 and to Staff interrogatories by letters dated September 6, 2001, September 17, 2001 and September 26, 2001.

According to the petition, Petitioner was incorporated under the laws of the State of New York on November 7, 1997. Petitioner's principal offices are located at 132 West 31 Street, 13th Floor, New York, New York 10001. Petition at 3. CECI is a wholly owned subsidiary of Consolidated Edison, Inc. Petition at 4.

Petitioner submitted copies of its Articles of Incorporation, New York Certificate of Good Standing and its New Jersey Certificate of Authority to Operate as a Foreign Corporation. Petition at 4, Exhibits A, B and C. According to the petition and its subsequent clarification, CECI was formed to provide local exchange and interexchange services. Petition at 1, September 6, 2001 letter. Petitioner advised that it is currently authorized to provide facilities-based and resold local exchange and interexchange services in Connecticut, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Illinois, Maine, Massachusetts, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island and Vermont. CECI advised that it has not been denied authority to provide telecommunications services in any state. In addition, CECI indicated that it has no pending civil, criminal or administrative actions against it.

CECI advised that it is currently negotiating with Verizon New Jersey, Inc. for an interconnection agreement.

Petitioner stated that it seeks authority to offer all forms of local exchange and interexchange telecommunications services to other telecommunications companies and large telecommunications intensive businesses, beginning initially in the Newark area and expanding to other metropolitan areas of New Jersey. CECI will initially lease facilities of other carriers, but intends to develop a fiber optic communications network of its own. Petition at 7.

Petitioner filed a motion for a protective order, limiting the availability of financial information contained in Exhibit E of the petition. Petitioner requested a waiver of N.J.S.A. 48:3-7.8(a) and N.J.A.C. 14:1-4.3, 14:1-5.15 and 14:10-1.16, which require that its books and records be maintained in accordance with the Uniform System of Accounts (USOA) and within the State of New Jersey. Petitioner requested, in the interest of efficiency and to prevent undue burden, permission to maintain its books and records in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Principles (GAAP). Petition at 6. Petitioner also requested permission to keep all books, records, documents and other writings incident to the conduct of Petitioner's business in the State of New Jersey at Petitioner's corporate offices in New York, New York. Petition at 7. Petitioner also stated that, upon written notice from the Board, it will produce its books and records at such time and place within New Jersey as the Board may designate and will pay any reasonable expenses for examination of the records. Petition at 7.

Petitioner asserted that approval of its petition will further the public interest by expanding the availability of competitive telecommunications services in the State of New Jersey. Petition at 8. Petitioner also asserted that approval of this petition will provide New Jersey customers with access to new technologies and service choices and will permit customers to achieve increased efficiencies and cost savings. In addition, Petitioner stated that approval of its petition will enhance the telecommunications infrastructure in the State of New Jersey and will facilitate economic development. Petition at 9.

With regard to its technical and managerial qualifications, CECI stated that it possesses the technical capability and managerial qualifications to operate and manage its telecommunications operations in the State of New Jersey. Petition at 5. Petitioner submitted the professional biographies of its key personnel who, according to CECI, are well qualified to execute its business plans, and have extensive managerial and technical experience in the telecommunications industry. Petition at 5, Exhibit D.

Petitioner has submitted, as evidence of its financial qualifications, its most recent financial statements for all jurisdictions currently served by CECI, and will be required to file two years of pro forma balance sheets and income statements for its New Jersey operations prior to approval of its tariff.

The Division of the Ratepayer Advocate, by letter dated October 22, 2001, recommended approval of this petition.

DISCUSSION

On February 8, 1996, the federal Telecommunications Act of 1996, P.L. 104-104, 110 Stat. 56, codified in scattered sections of 47 U.S.C. §151 et seq., was signed into law, removing barriers to competition by providing that:

[n]o State or local statute or regulation, or other State or local legal requirement, may prohibit or have the effect of prohibiting the ability of any entity to provide any interstate or intrastate telecommunications service.

[47 U.S.C. §253(a)].

Therefore, Board approval of Petitioner's entry into the telecommunications marketplace is required, assuming Petitioner meets all other requirements, including, but not limited to, a demonstration of financial, technical and managerial integrity.

In considering this petition, the Board recognizes its obligation not to prohibit entry into intrastate telecommunications markets. 47 U.S.C. §253(a). Approval is also in keeping with the New Jersey State Legislature's decision that it is the policy of the State to provide diversity in the supply of telecommunications services, and its findings that competition will "promote efficiency, reduce regulatory delay and foster productivity and innovation" and "produce a wider selection of services at competitive market-based prices." N.J.S.A. 48:2-21.16(a)(4); N.J.S.A. 48:2-21.16(b)(1) and (3).

Therefore, having reviewed CECI's petition and the information supplied in support thereof, the Board FINDS that Petitioner has demonstrated that it possesses the requisite financial, technical and managerial resources, which are necessary to provide telecommunications services in New Jersey. Accordingly, the Board HEREBY AUTHORIZES Petitioner to provide local exchange and interexchange telecommunications services in New Jersey subject to approval of its tariff and the submission of pro forma financial statements for its New Jersey operations. The Board notes that Petitioner will not be able to provide telecommunications services until a tariff is approved by the Board and the required financial statements have been provided.

Regarding the Petitioner's request for waivers of Board rules, the Board FINDS that the Petitioner has demonstrated good cause why the Board should grant relief from its requirements that Petitioner maintain its books and records under the USOA and within New Jersey. Therefore, subject to the Petitioner's continuing responsibility to provide the Board its books and records upon 48 hours notice, and in the manner requested, and to pay to the Board any reasonable expenses or charges incurred by the Board for any investigation or examination of these books and records, the Board APPROVES Petitioner's request for the exemptions from maintaining its books and records in New Jersey and under the USOA.

Regarding the Petitioner's request for confidential treatment of the financial information submitted as Exhibit E, the Board FINDS that the Petitioner has shown good cause, pursuant to N.J.A.C. 1:1-14.1, that this information merits protection from disclosure in order to prevent competitive harm to the Petitioner. Therefore, the Board DIRECTS that this financial information be kept under seal.

DATED: 11/5/01

BOARD OF PUBLIC UTILITIES
BY:

(signed)
CONNIE O. HUGHES
PRESIDENT

(signed)
FREDERICK F. BUTLER
COMMISSIONER

(signed)
CAROL J. MURPHY
COMMISSIONER

ATTEST:

(signed)
FRANCES L. SMITH
BOARD SECRETARY